

THE DEFENSE OF FORT HARRISON.

Our readers have often, we presume, observed in the public prints references to the defence of Fort Harrison, in the year 1812, by General (then Captain) Taylor, and may have seen some brief accounts of the particulars of that remarkable event; but we have ourselves met with no account of it so full as one which we have lately found in a Kentucky paper, and now subjoin. The description of an exploit of such unsurpassed heroism, which foreshadowed those high military attributes which have been so gloriously developed in the subsequent career of the then youthful soldier, and which have conferred on him the title of "one who never surrenders," will doubtless be perused with deep interest by all our readers. In the midst of the appalling scenes here narrated, which would have filled with dismay, if not despair, the heart of almost any other man, the young Captain said of himself, in describing them, "I never for one moment lost my presence of mind." It is this rare presence of mind, offspring of the highest courage, which constitutes one of the most striking features in Gen. Taylor's character, and one of the chief elements of his wonderful achievements.

FROM THE FRANKFORD "COMMONWEALTH." THE TESTIMONY OF AN OLD SOLDIER.—The following letter, addressed to Gov. Letcher, has been handed to us for publication. The writer is an old soldier, a citizen of Owen county, and a plain old gentleman of the old school. He knows Old Zack; has known him from his boyhood. Let the young upstarts who are so ready to disparage Gen. Taylor give place to the writer of this letter.

NEW LIBERTY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1848. DEAR SIR: In a conversation with you on the subject of the pending Presidential election, I mentioned that I had formed an acquaintance with Gen. Taylor in the fall of 1812, immediately after his meteoric defence of Fort Harrison. At that period I most willingly communicate my recollections of that glorious conflict with his savage besiegers. In order to show plain the prominent incidents of that scene of horror, and to make that nothing less than the cool firmness and indomitable courage of such a man as Capt. Taylor, could successfully have met such an emergency, will require more space than I had anticipated. But I will commence as best I can.

Capt. Taylor was left in command of this hastily-constructed fort by Gov. Harrison, after the battle of Tippecanoe, in 1811. It was situated on the Wabash river, about seventy-five miles above Vincennes, in a central position, and for miles all the Indian forces, the Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan frontiers. It became a barrier to their meditated massacre of not only the frontier inhabitants, but especially of the citizens of Vincennes, this being the residence of Gov. Harrison, who was particularly the object of their vengeance; hence their determination to reduce the place and slaughter the garrison. For several days previous to the attack small parties would approach the fort, under the guise of friendship and for purposes of trade. Capt. Taylor was too well acquainted with the Indian character to be deceived by their assidues, or to mistake their ulterior objects. He would not admit them into the fort under any of their pretences. He held, and he kept, his men in the most perfect discipline, and made them concentrate their forces (about seven hundred) and make a bold attack. Soon after 12 o'clock, on a dark night, they succeeded in getting fire to the lower blockhouse near the river, which contained the contractor's stores. This was effected with the greatest secrecy; not a word was announced by their presence until their belated pursuit, as they supposed, was near its accomplishment. The sentries discovered the fire too late for its extinguishing, the combustible materials upon which it was acting (whiskey, bacon, pork, flour, &c.) were instantly in flames, and communicating their devouring flames to the row of buildings above, which constituted the line of defence next to the river, consisting of barracks, hospital, &c. At this awful moment the yelling of the Indians, the rattling of muskets, and the screams of several women who had taken shelter in the fort, made every heart quake, save that of Taylor and his brave hospital surgeon, Dr. Clarke. At this critical and fearful moment Taylor directed Dr. Clarke, with one or two faithful soldiers, to ascend the burning rock and tear off the logs, while himself and those that were able drew water from a deep well and conveyed it to others above, by which means, after the most exhausting toil, they succeeded in subduing the further progress of the flames. In the mean time, the building containing the contractor's stores and the adjoining cinders were burnt down, leaving a bed of brands, coals, and cinders, heated as though just vomited from the bowels of Etna, the besiegers still yelling and firing like infernal demons. The ready genius of Taylor immediately set to work putting down the quartermaster and a sergeant's quarters for materials to form a temporary breastwork across the consumed angle, to secure him from an immediate assault through the breach. Amidst the greatest consternation and error of the scene two of the most able-bodied men in the garrison leaped from the picketing and made their escape to Vincennes. Their description of the assault and the fury of the flames at the moment of their departure rattled every heart. All exclaimed "Taylor and his men are scattered, the Indians will be down on us! What shall we do?" The Eighth Kentucky Regiment was then lying at Vincennes, and a number of Indiana militia, with some United States rangers, under Col. Russell. The whole were organized as soon as possible, and Col. Russell, with all the militia, for the most of the garrison, and Judge Park (who was then in command of some cavalry) selected some daring spirits like himself, braved every danger, and approached near enough to the fort to ascertain that its colors were still flying at the top of the tall mast to which they were attached. The Indians were still hovering round the fort, though they had ceased a moment to fire, and the report of the cannon was still heard. Col. Russell immediately put in motion the militia, amounting to near two hundred men, and with cautious eelerity reached the fort in less than four days. The Indians had retired upon Russell's approach, leaving behind them the sad evidences of their meditated cruelty and savage ferocity. You cannot well imagine any thing like the picture of the scene when we arrived at the gate of the fort. Capt. Taylor met us with a pale emaciated face, from recent exertions and hardship, but upon his noble brow shone the cap of the hero and soldier, and while we took him in, I can never forget the emotions of my own heart on this solemn occasion. The whole garrison consisted of about sixty-five men and some women and children, and the fort was in a most deplorable state. Capt. Taylor himself had suffered much from disease. From the burning of the contractor's stores until their relief the whole garrison subsisted on green grass, obtained from the adjoining prairie, all falling alike, Capt. Taylor setting the first example of potage and forage.

No man ever more completely enjoyed the situation and love of his soldiers than Capt. Taylor; he was surrounded as a father; his commands were always given in the mild tones of parental authority, and obedience was rendered by all with alacrity and delight.

Much has been said about Gen. Taylor's mental and cultivated capacities; no man was ever more wronged than he has been, if those capacities are to be believed. I presume you know as well as I do that the man who stood so low in the estimation of the world, and who was so long in the most important official knowledge, and his business hours were occupied with great industry in his personal. He was greatly mistaken if he supposed that Gen. Taylor has been described by enemies and friends in the same manner as he has been at the time of which I speak, of being thus wronged about twenty-four years of age, had stored their minds with such general and useful knowledge that he possessed; and his superior habits, joined to strong intellectual endowments, were peculiarly adapted to the growth of those propensities which at this early age were rapidly developing themselves. In such a conversation, Gen. Taylor was constantly interesting; not for any great power of words or eloquence, but for his great object, which was to enlighten, to instruct, and to lead; whenever he spoke, all expected to hear a sentence well formed and profound. His manner of delivery was not very dignified, yet there was an emphasis, such an indelible conviction in all he said, that the effect was

irresistible. It is a great piece of folly, as I look upon the effort with astonishment, that some newspaper scribblers, stumpy orators, street-corner peddlers, and bar-room politicians are trying to impress the country with the opinion that Gen. Taylor wants all the qualifications necessary to make a good President. Sir, the contrary is true. He is free, and has always been, from the school of intrigue and political management. Possessing a strong, intelligent, discriminating mind, cultivated by regular courses of studies, habits and untiring industry, the whole built upon and sustained (not upon a platform of principles prescribed by other men) by a spotless reputation, flowing from integrity of purpose, honesty of heart, and pure love of his country. These are Gen. Taylor's qualifications; they are above all price.

I have thus, in a very concise and handy manner, thrown together my thoughts and personal feelings about Gen. Taylor; they are not heavy evidences of his character; but are drawn from my personal knowledge of the man.

Most respectfully, thy obedient servant, THOMAS S. KINGSFATE.

Hon. R. P. LETCHER, GOV. OF WEST VIRGINIA.

As an appropriate appendage to the above interesting narrative, we insert from the New York Courier and Enquirer the subjoined article on the great battle of Buena Vista, which presents some interesting views on that crowning glory of the illustrious old Chief's military exploits:

THE BATTLE OF BUENA VISTA.—The Democratic Review is unquestionably entitled to the notoriety of being the boldest and reckless to deny to General Taylor the credit of the battle of Buena Vista; and, if the evidence were reported in the utter hopelessness of the Locofoco cause, it would be aquiescent in this act of desperation. That "those who love the gods wish to destroy their first make mad" is a Latin adage old with Christianity itself, and was doubtless based upon an unimpaired knowledge of human nature. In all ages reckless and imprudent men, in the spirit of desperation, commit acts of madness and insanity which produce the very results which they deplore, and for which there might have been a hope at least of averting their impending fate. Hence the declaration *Quoniam Deus, &c.* of the ancients; and it is but the illustration of this truth in the character of the desperately reckless and unprincipled Taylor that we find an attempt made to withhold from Gen. Taylor the richly-merited honors of the battle of Buena Vista.

So far as such a preposterous assault upon the claim of the old hero to the nation's gratitude can do for the public mind, it is beneath contempt. If the Democratic Review were to charge to-morrow that WASHINGTON was in no way instrumental in achieving our independence, the declaration would be as true as its declaration that Gen. Taylor did not win the battle of Buena Vista; and, what is more, the one declaration would have quite as much weight with the people of the United States as the other. History tells us that the friends of JEFFERSON, in his day, did not hesitate to assail the character and the fame of WASHINGTON; but to the people of the United States, it is not necessary that all should do their duty; it was equally *when and where* it was to be performed, and gave his orders accordingly. Beyond all doubt, Capt. Taylor's artillery, in the last critical onslaught of the enemy, secured to us the triumph. But who ordered that battery to open when and where it did, unsupported, and with a full knowledge of the fact that the enemy were not repulsed the battle must be lost? When Gen. Taylor was told that "the fort battery" was where he did was to run the risk of losing the guns, his reply was, "and if the battery be not formed here instantly, and the enemy checked, we will not only lose the guns, but the battle also!" If, then, the battle of Buena Vista could be claimed for any subordinate, Capt. Bragg probably could exhibit the best special claim, because it was his battery which arrested the enemy in his last charge. Wood nobly did his duty wherever it was his fortune to be; and so did Bragg and Belknap, and every chief and every private soldier; and it was because all did their duty in every part of the field, and because Taylor was everywhere, pointing out what that duty was, and how and where to be performed; and, above all, it was because he had won the hearts and possessed the entire confidence of his men, and because his presence gave them the assurance of victory, that he was enabled to triumph against the fearful odds arrayed against him.

In connection with this subject, we would refer to the *Courier and Enquirer* of the 11th May, 1847, the following remarks. They were the result of reflection when all the events of the battle were fresh in the recollection of the whole country; and we may add that the conclusions arrived at in these remarks, were so much in accordance with the public sentiment at the time, that nine-tenths of the papers in the United States, republished and endorsed what we wrote, accompanied generally, with complimentary remarks to the writer. Many of those very papers, now that Gen. TAYLOR is the candidate for the Presidency, are loaning themselves to the vile slander that another is entitled to the credit of the battle of Buena Vista!

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COMMUNICATIONS.

UNIONTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA, OCTOBER 17, 1848.

GENTLEMEN: A friend at Washington has just sent me a pamphlet of sixteen pages, printed and circulated "under authority of the National and Jackson Democratic Association Committee" at Washington, entitled "A Refutation of Andrew Stewart's fabrications against Lewis Cass." This pamphlet, it seems, is copied from "the Union," which it originally appeared as editorial.

I feel myself constrained to notice this extraordinary pamphlet, not so much in self vindication as in defence of Gen. Taylor against the most gross, deliberate, and willful falsehoods invented or uttered against any man in any age of the world, and which exposed cannot fail to exert with overwhelming effect upon the authors and their cause. Some idea of the character of this pamphlet may be formed from the fact that its first page contains no less than fourteen deliberate falsehoods and misrepresentations of records—some of which I shall directly proceed to point out and expose. But first a few words in regard to General Cass's extra pay as Governor of Michigan. This I have already ascertained to be \$65,865.46, but Mr. Ritchie and his committee say "we make the whole amount \$63,990.46," the difference, being only \$1,875, is not worth disputing about. Of this sum they say "only about \$17,035.96 was for compensation which went into General Cass's private pocket, the balance being for expenses actually incurred."

Now to show how utterly unfounded this suggestion is, it is only necessary to refer to the sixteenth page of Mr. Polk's message of the 11th of August last, where Mr. John M. McCalla himself shows that the whole amount actually expended by Gov. Cass for office rent, fuel, quarters, clerk hire, house-keep, wood, rent of official chamber, rations for Indians, &c. amounted, during the first year of his official term, to only \$12,162.30, being less than \$271 a year, which Gen. Cass regularly charged to the Government, and which was as regularly repaid to him.

In 1821, eight years after Gov. Cass's appointment, he made a general charge against the Government of \$1,500 a year for fuel, office rent, &c., and \$730 for rations—making \$2,230 a year for the whole eight years, from which the \$271 a year actually disbursed and repaid to Gen. Cass was deducted, as stated by Mr. McCalla, p. 16, thus—

Table with 2 columns: Description and Amount. Shows \$1,500 for fuel, office rent, &c. and \$730 for rations, totaling \$2,230. Deducts \$271 for actual disbursements, leaving \$1,959.

Being a part of the above sum of \$2,162.30 received by Gov. Cass from the United States during the eight years aforesaid, and leaving a balance of \$16,663.67 clear profits, which went into "Gov. Cass's private pocket," and which he continued to receive with \$770 a year additional for ten years, until he was appointed Secretary of War in 1831, amounting, with \$12,000 of other extras, to \$63,990.46, as admitted by Messrs. Ritchie & Co. To which add the \$2,162.33 previously received by Gov. Cass for his actual disbursements, making an aggregate of \$66,152.79 received over and above his legal salary, and without the authority or sanction of law.

During the whole eighteen years that Gen. Cass held the office of Governor of Michigan no application was ever made to Congress to sanction these enormous extra charges by an appropriation to pay them, but the whole was taken out of the appropriations made for the Indians. Congress having, however, in some way discovered these abuses in 1821, restricted these appropriations to their legitimate objects. In consequence of which Mr. Calhoun, then Secretary of War, addressed the following letter to Mr. Cass, dated the 29th of May, 1822:

"In consequence of the temper manifested in Congress, at the late session, in relation to allowances made to Governors of Territories as superintendents of Indian affairs, and also of the reduced appropriation which has been made for the Indian Department, it is deemed advisable to reduce those allowances. The reduced rates per day which formed a part of the allowance to you will be accordingly discontinued, and the allowance of \$1,500 only for clerk hire, office rent, &c. will be continued from the last settlement."

Strange as it may seem, from the date of this letter, intended to restrict Gov. Cass to \$1,500 a year, he managed to receive \$3,000, instead of \$1,500, from that time up to the end of his service in 1831. It was managed in this way. He acquiesced in this decision, and received his \$1,500 a year for about seven years, then in 1828, a favorable opportunity offering, he brought forward another claim of \$1,500 a year for services alleged to have been rendered beyond the territorial limits of Michigan, which he ran back to the time his rations were stopped by Mr. Calhoun in 1822, and which he continued to receive, with his other \$1,500 extra salary, up to the time he went into the War Office in 1831. So that his extra allowances, instead of being reduced as was intended by Mr. Calhoun, to \$1,500, were actually increased to \$3,000 a year, which he continued to receive with eight dollars a day and forty cents a mile for travelling in negotiating treaties with Indians, amounting to \$12,000 more for some ten years, when his office expired in 1831.

To show the extravagant character of these extra charges made by Gov. Cass, it is sufficient to state the single fact, proved by the records referred to, that Gen. Cass, while Governor of Michigan, actually received more in the shape of "extra charges" than double the amount paid to all the other Governors of all the Territories of the United States for similar services from the foundation of the Government up to the present time.

The late message of the President, Polk, having compelled Mr. Ritchie and his committee to admit the amount of extras received by Gov. Cass, they now attempt to justify or excuse him by fabricating one of the most base and barefaced slanders against Gen. Taylor that was ever conceived or uttered. They assert that in addition to his regular pay of \$93,421.84 Gen. Taylor received \$74,864 extra pay.

never received one dollar of extra pay, I refer to House Document No. 6, 3d session 27th Congress, and No. 18, 1st session 28th Congress, appended to President Polk's message, giving all the extra pay of all the officers of the army, and proving that General Taylor never received one dollar of extra pay. And this further appears by the following certificate, furnished by an officer of the House:

"August 8, 1848.—I certify that, upon examination of House Documents No. 6, 3d session 27th Congress, and No. 18, 1st session 28th Congress, giving all the 'extra allowances' paid to all the officers of the army and governors of Territories, from the organization of the Department of War, to the 28th February, 1848, the name of Zachary Taylor is not to be found in either of said reports."

I have said nothing of General Cass's private life or character; I have spoken only of his official conduct in a high and responsible office under the Government. This is a fair and legitimate subject for public examination. How are the people to judge of the fitness and qualifications of a man for one high office but by looking to the manner in which he has discharged the duties of others? I have stated nothing but facts derived from official records, to which I have referred, and fully refuted. As regards myself, I care nothing for the defiling abuse of a pen and profligate press; it passes by me as idle wind; but when they attempt to gross falsehoods to injure the fair fame of one of the purest and best men of the age, it shall not pass unnoticed.

Reserving for another notice the correction of some of the other falsehoods contained in this pamphlet, I remain yours, &c. A. STEWART.

ASTRONOMICAL.

COMMUNICATED FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

THE MISSING PLANET.—PARIS, SEPTEMBER 15.—The missing planet of the Academy of late in which there was anything worth regarding, and even this was not of a practical character, were those of the 29th ultimo and the 11th instant. On the former day M. Babinet made a communication respecting the planet Neptune, which has been generally called M. Leverrier's planet, the discovery of it having, as it was said, been made by him from theoretical deductions, which astonished and delighted the scientific public. We had already had inferred from the action on other planets of some other, which ought to exist, verified, at least so it was thought at the time, by actual vision. Neptune was actually seen by other astronomers, and the honor of the theorist obtained additional lustre. But it appears from the communication of M. Babinet that this is not the planet of M. Leverrier. He had placed his planet at a distance from the sun equal to 36 times the limit of the terrestrial orbit; Neptune revolves at a distance nearly 30 times of these limits, which makes a difference of nearly 200,000,000 of leagues. M. Leverrier had assigned to his planet a body equal to 38 times that of the earth. Neptune has only one-third of this volume. M. Leverrier had stated the revolution of his planet round the sun to take place in 217 years. Neptune requires its revolution in 104 years. Thus, then, Neptune is not M. Leverrier's planet, and all his theory as regards that planet, but it will not answer the calculations which he had made for Neptune. In the sitting of the 14th M. Leverrier noticed the communication of M. Babinet, and to a great extent evinced his own error. He compared, indeed, the distance of what he said was taken in fact, had inferred from the action on other planets of some other, which ought to exist, verified, at least so it was thought at the time, by actual vision. Neptune was actually seen by other astronomers, and the honor of the theorist obtained additional lustre. But it appears from the communication of M. Babinet that this is not the planet of M. Leverrier. He had placed his planet at a distance from the sun equal to 36 times the limit of the terrestrial orbit; Neptune revolves at a distance nearly 30 times of these limits, which makes a difference of nearly 200,000,000 of leagues. M. Leverrier had assigned to his planet a body equal to 38 times that of the earth. Neptune has only one-third of this volume. M. Leverrier had stated the revolution of his planet round the sun to take place in 217 years. Neptune requires its revolution in 104 years. Thus, then, Neptune is not M. Leverrier's planet, and all his theory as regards that planet, but it will not answer the calculations which he had made for Neptune. In the sitting of the 14th M. Leverrier noticed the communication of M. Babinet, and to a great extent evinced his own error. He compared, indeed, the distance of what he said was taken in fact, had inferred from the action on other planets of some other, which ought to exist, verified, at least so it was thought at the time, by actual vision. Neptune was actually seen by other astronomers, and the honor of the theorist obtained additional lustre. But it appears from the communication of M. Babinet that this is not the planet of M.